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И КУЛТУРОЛОШКИ ИСТРАЖУВАЊА

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Меѓународно списание за лингвистички, книжевни  
и културолошки истражувања

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## ПРЕДГОВОР

Шестиот број на меѓународното научно списание „Палимпсест“ доаѓа како потврда на заложбите од уредниците на оваа научна публикација, но и на раководството и на сиот наставен кадар од Филолошкиот факултет при Универзитетот „Гоце Делчев“ во Штип, за поставување на квалитетот на списанието во секоја смисла на едно повисоко ниво во однос на сите претходно објавени броеви. Впрочем, трудовите што се објавуваат во овој број од списанието и нивната солидна научно-истражувачка вредност го илустрираат зголемениот интерес на лингвистите, книжевните теоретичари, историчари и критичари, културолозите и методичарите на наставата од Македонија и од странство за учество во креирањето на секој нареден број. Имено, во шестиот број на „Палимпсест“ се приложени 25 научни, стручни и прегледни трудови на автори од Македонија (од Универзитетот „Гоце Делчев во Штип, од Универзитетот „Св. Климент Охридски“ од Битола и од Универзитетот „Св. Кирил и Методиј“ од Скопје), но и од други земји како што се Србија, Хрватска, Словенија, Босна и Херцеговина, Словачка, Турција, Брегот на Слоновата Коска и Мароко, во петте постојани рубрики од списанието: Јазик, Книжевност, Култура, Методика на наставата и Прикази. Очигледно е дека за меѓународното научно списание „Палимпсест“, полека но сигурно, се прошируваат сферите на интерес во голем број научни кругови во разни држави од нашава планета. Во таа смисла, пријатно изненадува покажаниот огромен интерес за објавување на научни и стручни трудови во „Палимпсест“ од нашите почитувани колешки и колеги од африканскиот научен круг.

Од друга страна, преку интересот на странските истражувачи за нашето списание, на индиректен начин и Филолошкиот факултет од Штип ја продлабочува и ја проширува научната соработка со поголем број странски универзитети што е во духот на современото високо образование во светски рамки. Во таа смисла, со задоволство можеме да констатираме дека меѓународното научно списание „Палимпсест“ дава значаен прилог во развојот и растежот на нашиот Факултет на меѓународно ниво.

Нема сомнение дека ова наше меѓународно научно списание и натаму ќе се развива по нагорна линија со што ќе нуди значаен придонес во унапредувањето и афирмирањето на македонската, но и на светската модерна научно-истражувачка работа од областите лингвистика, наука за книжевноста, методика на наставата и културологија. Упорноста и ентузијазмот на големиот број учесници од 17 земји во светот коишто се вклучени во креирањето на секој број од „Палимпсест“ претставуваат солидна основа за нашата верба во брзиот растеж на квалитетот на оваа меѓународна научна публикација. Со таква верба и ви ги нудиме за читање трудовите од шестиот број на „Палимпсест“.

Толе Белчев, уредник на „Палимпсест“

## FOREWORD

The sixth issue of the international scientific journal “Palimpsest” is not only a confirmation of the efforts of the editors of this scientific publication, but also of the management and the academic staff of the Faculty of Philology at Goce Delcev University - Stip for raising the journal’s quality in every sense to a higher level in relation to all previously published issues. In fact, the papers published in this issue and their solid scientific and research value illustrate the growing interest of linguists, literary theorists, historians and critics, cultural scientists and teaching methodologists from Macedonia and abroad for participating in the creation of each upcoming issue. Namely, the sixth issue of “Palimpsest” contains 25 research, theoretical and review papers by authors not only from Macedonia (from Goce Delcev University in Stip, St. Kliment Ohridski University in Bitola, and St. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje), but also from other countries such as Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovakia, Turkey, Ivory Coast and Morocco, in the five permanent sections of the journal: Language, Literature, Culture, Teaching Methodology and Book Reviews. It is obvious that the international scientific journal “Palimpsest” slowly but surely expands its areas of interest in many scientific circles in many countries worldwide. In that sense, it is a pleasant surprise that there is great interest in publishing research and theoretical papers in our journal by our respected colleagues from the African scientific circles.

On the other hand, through the interest of foreign researchers the Faculty of Philology in Stip indirectly deepens and extends the scientific cooperation with a number of foreign universities, which is in the spirit of contemporary higher education worldwide. In that sense, we can gladly state that the international scientific journal “Palimpsest” gives a significant contribution to the development and growth of our Faculty internationally.

There is no doubt that this international scientific journal will continue to develop in an upward direction, which will offer significant contribution to the promotion and affirmation of the Macedonian as well as the world’s modern scientific and research work in the fields of linguistics, literary theory, teaching methodology and culture. The persistence and enthusiasm of the large number of participants from 17 countries in the world involved in the creation of every issue of “Palimpsest” provide a solid basis for our belief in the rapid growth of the quality of this international scientific publication. With such faith, we invite you to read the papers in the sixth issue of “Palimpsest”.

Tole Belcev, editor of “Palimpsest”

## AN OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN FRANCE

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the language policy in France in relation to French and the regional languages. We start the overview from the Renaissance period when the French national feeling began to form and the distinctiveness of the French nation started to manifest, leading to increased usage of the French language and gradual superseding of the regional languages. Taking into consideration the fact that after the French Revolution in 1789, the unity policy of the French nation intensifies and thus the directions of action in the languages of its territory change, we divided the overview of the language policy in France in two parts: before and after the Revolution. For the revolutionaries, the ignorance of the French language was an obstacle for the democracy and spreading the revolutionary ideas, thus extending the superseding of the regional languages throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the World War II, the regional languages and cultures received more attention and they were regarded as a treasure that needed to be preserved and their disappearance to be prevented. According to the relations and the language activities undertaken by France in the contemporary period, we distinguish Language policy in relation to the French language and Language policy in relation to the regional languages.

**Keywords:** *language policy, France, French language, regional languages.*

### Introduction

The language policy comprehends all measures, planning and strategies whose aim is to regulate the status and the form of one or more languages (Calvet 1993: pp.111-123, Calvet 1996: pp.3-9, Calvet 1999: pp.154-155, Calvet 2002: pp. 15-16, Crystal 1999: pp. 190, Dubois 2001: pp. 369). The language policy in France comprehends several policies or measures, which France undertakes in relation to the French language. Since 1992, the French language is the only official language in France (Constitution du 4 octobre 1958, art. 2 & Loi n° 94-665) which means that the language policy in France is based on monolingualism.

France's treatment of the language has its own history and is based on the idea that it is a duty and a mission of the State. In fact, in the period between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, France's greatest concern in the area of language was to secure the superiority of the French language over the other languages spoken in the country.

We start the overview of the language policy in France in relation to the French and the regional languages from the Renaissance period, when the French national feeling was created and the distinctiveness of the French nation was

manifested. That brings to an increased usage of the French language and gradual superseding of the regional languages. Taking into consideration the fact that after the French Revolution in 1789, the unity policy of the French nation intensified and thus the directions of action in the languages of its territory changed, we divided the overview of the language policy in France in two parts: before and after the Revolution. For the revolutionaries, the ignorance of the French language was an obstacle for the democracy and spreading the revolutionary ideas, thus extending the superseding of the regional languages throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century despite the change of the social system after the Revolution.

Based on the relations and the language activities undertaken by France in the contemporary period, we distinguish Language policy in relation to the French language and Language policy in relation to the regional languages.

The contemporary language policy in France in relation to the French language comprehends three periods that begin in 1966 when the institutions responsible for its defence and promotion were established. The contemporary language policy in France in relation to the regional languages consists of two periods that begin with the adoption of the *Deixonne* Law in 1951 and the signing of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (*Charte européenne des langues régionales ou minoritaires*) in 1999.

### **The language policy in France before the French revolution**

The language uniformization policy in France in favour of the French language was gradually applied by the Renaissance, along with the forming of the French nation<sup>1</sup>. This policy also highlights the desire to reduce the role of the Latin language, which would reduce the power of the Church and would consequently increase the power of the state. In addition to this, is the fact that in the 13<sup>th</sup> century legal documents written in French by royal notaries were found, instead of the previous exclusive use of the Latin language, and in the period of 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century the French language was gradually imposed as an administrative language in the royal charters, superseding the Latin language from any of its official use.

In 1539, in the castle in Villers-Cotterêts, François I signed the *Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts* which imposed the French as an official language in the law and administration instead of the Latin language in writing all the legal and administrative acts, in order to respond to the needs of the population who no longer understood the Latin language. This stipulates using only the French language in all decisions of the supreme courts in order to attenuate the ambiguity, uncertainty or the possibility of their misinterpretation (art. 110, 111). In fact, it is about the Parisian dialect that was distinguished by its characteristics in the pronunciation, the intonation and the vocabulary that lead to a state of diglossia among the population because that was the language of the elite, the court, the educated people, the Parisian aristocracy which was an important social factor versus the regional and dialectal versions that were spoken by the lower classes of the population. It was

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<sup>1</sup> This is also contributed by the early evolution of a geographical area in the French nation that distinguishes France from other countries (Sibille, 2000, pp. 91-92).



spoken by a little less than a million French from a total of 20 million inhabitants in the country.

In order to be able to fulfil all the social duties, the French language needed to be presented through rules and norms, that is, to be codified. At that time, there were hundreds of “professional censors” which were strongly supported by Louis XIV. Then, the language also experienced a particular consolidation that they regarded as superb perfection and ideal linguistic fixation. The censors also praise the usage of the well-chosen and elegant vocabulary.

However, this was not the only decision related to the language. According to Xavier Deniau (Deniau, 1983) all the previous prescriptions were also followed by Carlo IX in Article 35 of the *Ordonnance de Roussillon* (Ordonnance de 1563, dite de Roussillon, Art. 35), and since 1629 were also applicable in the Canon Law. Moreover, it was ordered to use the French language in public in the region of Béarn in 1621, Flanders in 1684, Alsace in 1865, and in 1700 and in 1753 for Roussillon (Deniau, 1983, p. 82).

Upon translating the New Testament into French language, by Lefèvre d’Etaples in 1523 and allowing defending the theses in French language in 1624, a very significant event was the establishment of the *French Academy* by Richelieu in 1635, during the period of Louis XIII, which had an expressive national character. Its main duty was to take care of the language, and in the Articles 24, 26 and 44 of its Statute is stated that the main function of the Academy is to work as hard and as diligent as possible, in order to provide definite rules to the French language and to make it pure, eloquent and capable of applying it in the art and science, and afterwards to comply a dictionary, grammar, rhetoric and poetics, and that rules for spelling shall be created as well (Oster, 1970, pp. 3-4.). In 1694, appeared the first edition of its *Académie’s dictionary* (*Dictionnaire de l’Académie*) that is consisted of only well-chosen words, relying on the tradition of the well-known “good usage” (bon usage) of Vaugelas.

On the eve of the Revolution, France represented a unitary country in the administrative, legal, economic, cultural and linguistic area. On the territory of the kingdom, the Flemings, Bretons, Catalans, Corsicans, Franco-Provençal populations around Jura, Alsatians and Lorrainer were integrated. The views of the monarchy in relation to the regional dialects were still controversial. Ferdinand Brunot (1909) believed that the royal government did not want their abolition. It highlighted the superiority of the French language while allowing the local dialects. Hermann Van Goethem (Van Goethem, 1989) disagreed with this, who by researching through court archives concluded that since the reign of Louis XIV, there was a real desire to establish authority of the French language (*ibid.*, 437- 460). However, at that time, the monarchy did not have control over the primary education, which is one of the main instruments for realization of the language policy (Bodé, 1991, p. 33).

### **The language policy in France after the French Revolution**

After the French Revolution in 1789 the unity policy of the French nation continued and intensified, and the ignorance of the French language was an obstacle for democracy and for spreading the revolutionary ideas. With the Revolution, the feudal system was abolished, a new division of ownership of the land was

exercised, the privileges of certain social structures were abolished, the political power was limited, there was rebalance of the relations between the church and the state, and the family structures were redefined. The French Revolution differed from the other revolutions due to its universal messages related to the entire humanity (Aulard, 1901). In 1790, the National Assembly began translating all the laws and decrees in the regional languages, but stopped this practice due to a shortage of translators, the high financial costs and a lack of willingness to preserve the regional languages (Leclerc, *La Révolution et la langue nationale des Français* (1789-1870)).

After the Revolution, dozen laws concerning the usage of language in administration, education, culture and religion have been adopted. Then, for the first time the language and the nation were connected. Since then, it became a "state matter" because the "united and indivisible Republic" whose motto was "Либертс, Ељуалитс анд Фратернитс" (Либертэ , Ё галитэ , Фратернитэ ) needed a language which, in spite of the linguistic disparity and distinctiveness of the old provinces, would constitute a guarantee of indivisibility and an instrument for raising the educational level of the masses. In September, 1791 in the National Assembly, Talleyrand in his speech clearly set the link between the spreading of the French language and the school institutions. "The language of the Constitution and the laws will be taught to all, and that mass of defective dialects which is the last remnant of feudalism, will have to disappear because the force of the things requires it" (*Rapport du 10 septembre 1791 devant l'Assemblée nationale*, p. 472). The bourgeoisie in the public speeches saw an obstacle in spreading their ideas and therefore, so it declared war to them. A member of the Committee on Public Health of that time, Bertrand Barère, began the defence in favour of the existence of a national language: "The Monarchy had a reason to resemble the Tower of Babel, but to leave the citizens not knowing the national language in democracy, means that they are not capable of controlling the authorities, and that is a treason to the country... The free people need one and only language for all" (Archives parlementaires, 1<sup>ère</sup> série, tome *LXXXIII*, pp. 713-717).

The Decree dated 21 October, 1792 concerning the organization of the public education requires the French language to be educational language. Five days later, another decree has been issued which supplements the previous, where in Article 6 is determined: "...The French language should soon become a family language" (Guillaume, 1894, pp. 688-690). On 16 prairial, that is, 28 May, 1794, Henri-Baptiste Grégoire publishes his well-known, *Report on the necessity and means to annihilate the patois and to universalise the use of the French language* (*Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d'anéantir les patois et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française*), whose research began in August 1790, in which he describes the language situation in France and the thirty different dialects that form the French Tower of Babel against "the language of freedom". For him it is paradoxical, or even more unbearable, that only 3 out of 25 million French people speak French, and 6 million do not know it at all, although it is used in Canada and on the coast of Mississippi and is represented everywhere as a universal language (Calvet, 1999, p. 72).

With the Decree dated July 1794, the French language was imposed as the only language in the law and administration and the regional languages were discarded (Décret du II Thermidor an II-20 juillet 1794). This defined every act to be written only in French on the territory of France (Décret du II Thermidor an II-20 juillet 1794, art. 1), no legal act can be certified if it is not written in the same language (Décret du II Thermidor an II-20 juillet 1794, art. 2) every official, officer or government trustee who, while exercising his function, will write or sign any legal act in a local idiom or in any language other than the French, will be detained from his home in front of the misdemeanour court and sentenced to 6 months in prison and revoked from its function (Décret du II Thermidor an II-20 juillet 1794, art. 3). The same penalty applies to every person that one month after the publishing of this decree will certify even not signed acts, written in a local idiom or in any language other than French (Décret du II Thermidor an II-20 juillet 1794, art. 4).

However, the 1803 Decree (Décret du 24 prairial an XI - 13 juin 1803, pp. 598-599), by which the French language becomes an administrative language of the empire in its new borders from the left side of Rhine and in Belgium, allows the used local dialect to be supplemented with an adequate translation in French. Whereas in the Circular letter, dated October, 1838 (Circulaires et instructions officielles relatives à l'instruction publique, 1865, pp. 679-680), instructions are given for the use of the French language against the local dialects and it is confirmed that in different parts of France, where the inhabitants speak local dialect, often the children in elementary school do not understand the French language. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, still a large number of French people did not use the French language as first language and its usage was neglected right after finishing school. Gérard Bodé believes that the military service contributed to preserving the language, and the violent introduction of the French language disrupted the social tissue. Other factors that contributed to gradual increase of the use of French language on the territory of France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century are the industrial revolution that generated strong rural-urban migration, the emergence of the railway, as well as the introduction of mandatory primary education, thus raising the cultural level of the population.

During the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century, the country's desire to spread the French language and impose a single language was constantly noted. However, although there was a tendency for the country to intervene on languages, there was still a great gap between creating a legal instrument by the central administration and its application in the regions. After the French Revolution, the language policy in France was at odds with the religious and intellectual behaviour of the population. The state project for imposing the French language and the literacy of the population was in conflict with the families that spoke the local dialects because all that was done without determining and respecting the real nature of the problem. There was also the view of the Church, which used the regional languages to bring the local population closer to religious education and further complicated the solution to this problem. Despite the official and nonofficial statistical data, it is very difficult to draw a conclusion on the results of that language policy. However, it can be said that the French language has the same status since before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as during the French Revolution (Bodé, 1991, p. 43).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and until the beginning of the contemporary language policy in France in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, France adopted an impressive number of laws concerning the French language, the regional languages and cultures, as well as the territorial collectivities. Expressed in numbers, this means dozen laws, about twenty decrees, nearly 40 administrative decisions of which 21 refer to terminology and the same amount of circular letters (Николовски, 2002, p. 34). The majority of these legal texts are related to promoting the French as a language of education and its terminology, and are less related to the linguistic rights of minorities, that correspond to the old tradition of exclusion of regional languages. However, there is a tendency of increasing the right to distinction and acknowledging the particularity of the regional languages.

During World War II, the Vichy regime unsuccessfully tried to introduce regional languages in the primary education, and after the war, they were paid greater attention and they were considered as treasure that needs to be preserved and their disappearance to be prevented.

According to the relation and language activities undertaken by France in the contemporary period, we distinguish *Language policy in relation to the French language* (Николовски, 2002, pp. 35-66 & Saint Tobert, 2000) and *Language policy in relation to the regional languages* (Николовски, 2002, pp. 67-93).

According to the manner of working and operation of the institutions whose main concern is its promotion and defence, we distinguish three periods of contemporary language policy in relation to the French language: 1. 1966-1984, a period of operation of the *High Committee for defense and expansion of the French language* (*Haut comité pour la défense et l'expansion de la langue française*) (Décret n°66-203), 2. 1984-1989, a period of operation of the *General Commissionership in the French language* (*Commissariat général de la langue française* и *Comité consultatif de la langue française*) (Décret n°84-91) and 3. After 1989, a period of operation of the *Superior Council of the French Language* (*Conseil supérieur de la langue française*) and *General Delegation for the French language and the languages of France* (*Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France*) (Décret n°89-403 & Décret n°2001-646).

Regarding the Language policy in relation to the regional languages, we distinguish two periods: 1. 1951-1999, after the adoption of the *Deixonne* Law, a period of their application in education and culture, as well as establishment of institutions whose purpose is their promotion in several areas of life; 2. The period after the signing of the *European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages* (*Charte européenne des langues régionales ou minoritaires*) in 1999, by which France undertakes to apply 39 of total 98 provisions concerning the following areas: education, judiciary, public services, mass media, culture, economy and cross-border cooperation, proposed by the Council of Europe. With the Constitutional audit of 23 July, 2008, Article 75-1 of the Constitution of France is added, which recognizes that regional languages are part of the French cultural heritage (Loi constitutionnelle du 23 juillet 2008, Article 40). However, France still has not ratified this Charter because it consists of unconstitutional clauses that are

incompatible with the Constitution of France that is Article 2, according to which French is the language of the Republic. With the ratification, it would be necessary to implement a new amendment of the Constitution that would allow it.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the documents related to the language policy in France concerning the French and the regional languages, we tried to give an overview of the language policy in France. We started the overview from the Renaissance period when the French national feeling was created and the distinctiveness of the French nation was manifested. This increased the usage of French language, while the usage of the regional languages was reduced. The overview of the language policy in France is divided in the period before and after the French Revolution in 1789, because it intensified the unity policy of the French nation. It directly influences the policy in favour of the French language through which democracy and revolutionary ideas are transferred. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the superseding of the regional languages continues, and after the World War II, they are paid greater attention and are considered as part of the French cultural heritage. We distinguish Language policy in relation to the French language and Language policy in relation to the regional languages.

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